

Your Health Journey Starts Here



A Practical Guide for Patients and Their Families

Visiting a hospital can bring many questions, especially if it is your first visit or you are coming for a major treatment. Knowing what to expect can make the experience less stressful and help you feel more confident. This guide covers every stage of your healthcare journey — from preparing for your visit and meeting your doctor, to undergoing treatment, recovering safely, and returning home.

PATIENTS

FAMILY MEMBERS

CAREGIVERS



What's Inside

What You'll Find in This Guide

This handbook covers everything you need to know before, during, and after your hospital visit. You don't need to read it from beginning to end — simply turn to the section that matches your needs.

1

Before Your Visit

Preparing documents, booking appointments, and knowing what to bring.

2

At the Hospital

Registration, consultation, diagnostic tests, and understanding your prescription.

3

During Your Stay

Admission, patient safety, surgery, and cancer care guidance.

4

Going Home

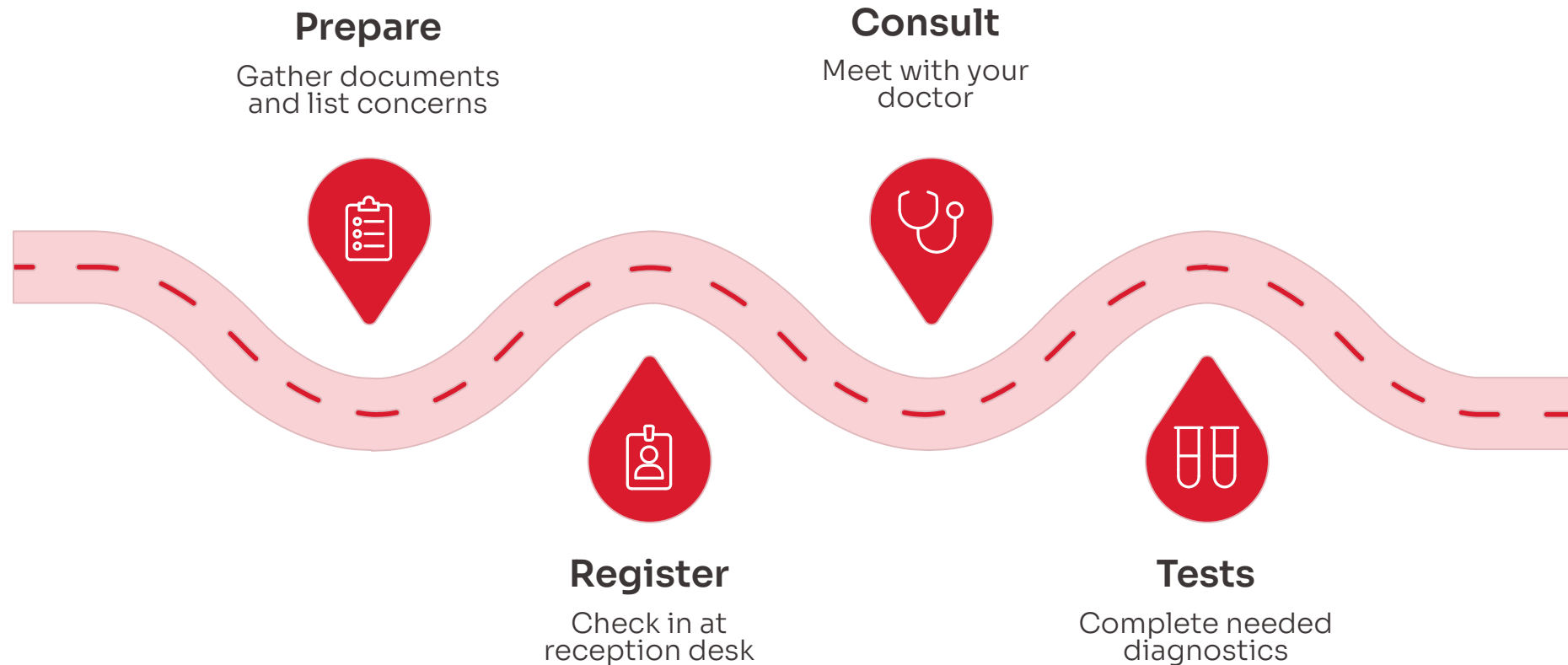
Discharge process, wound care, medicines, follow-up, and recovery at home.

 Feel free to keep this handbook with your medical records so you can refer to it whenever you need information.

Your Path Through Care

A Simple Overview of Your Hospital Journey

Most patients follow a similar path during their visit. Understanding these basic steps can help you feel prepared and informed throughout your care.



Every patient's journey is unique, but these six steps form the foundation of most hospital visits — whether you are coming for a routine check-up, a planned procedure, or emergency care.

Chapter 1

Preparing for Your Hospital Visit

A little preparation can make your visit easier. Whether you are coming for a routine check-up, a specialist consultation, or planned treatment, bringing the right documents and knowing what to expect will save time and help your doctor understand your health better.



Identity Proof

Aadhaar Card, PAN Card, Driving Licence, Passport, or Voter ID.



Medical Records

Previous prescriptions, blood reports, X-rays, CT/MRI scans, discharge summaries.



Medicine List

All current medicines including dosage, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies.



Insurance Docs

Health insurance card or government healthcare scheme documents, if applicable.



Before You Leave Home

Helpful Tips for a Smooth Visit

On the Day

- Arrive 15–30 minutes before your appointment to allow time for registration.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing if you expect blood tests, X-rays, or physiotherapy.
- Avoid excessive jewellery or strong perfumes that may make examinations difficult.
- Unless instructed to fast, do not skip meals unnecessarily before your visit.
- Bring a notebook or use your phone to note your doctor's advice.

If You Need Assistance

If you are elderly, pregnant, have difficulty walking, or require special support, always come with a trusted family member or caregiver. Children, senior citizens, and patients with disabilities may need additional support during their visit.

Write down any questions you want to ask your doctor before you leave home. Being well prepared helps your healthcare team provide faster, safer, and more effective care.

Chapter 2

Your First Visit: Registration to Consultation

If this is your first visit, you may not know where to go or what happens after you arrive. Most outpatient visits follow a simple process — from registration to consultation and, if needed, diagnostic tests or treatment.



Registration

Visit the registration counter. First-time patients receive a Unique Hospital ID (UHID). Keep this number safe for all future visits.



Find Your Department

You will be guided to the appropriate specialist — General Medicine, Cardiology, Orthopaedics, Oncology, and more. Ask reception if unsure.



Meet Your Doctor

Your doctor will ask about symptoms, medical history, and current medicines. The more accurate your answers, the easier it is to reach the right diagnosis.



After Consultation

Collect your prescription, test requests, follow-up appointment details, bills, and all medical reports before leaving.

Making the Most of Your Appointment

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

A consultation is your opportunity to understand your health and discuss concerns. Never hesitate to ask questions if something isn't clear. Many patients find it helpful to bring a family member to help remember important instructions.

- **What is causing my symptoms?**
- **Do I need any tests, and why?**
- **What treatment do you recommend?**
- **Are there side effects of the medicines?**
- **When should I return for a follow-up?**
- **What warning signs should I watch for at home?**

Chapter 3

Understanding Diagnostic Tests

Some conditions cannot be diagnosed based on symptoms alone. Diagnostic tests give your doctor additional information to confirm a diagnosis, monitor your health, or plan the best treatment. Being advised to undergo tests does not always mean you have a serious illness — many are done simply to confirm or rule out conditions.



Blood & Urine Tests

Check sugar levels, kidney and liver function, cholesterol, thyroid, signs of infection. Some require fasting — always follow instructions.



X-Ray & Ultrasound

X-rays evaluate bones and chest. Ultrasound uses sound waves to examine internal organs including liver, kidneys, and pregnancy. Quick and painless.



CT Scan & MRI

CT produces detailed cross-sectional images. MRI uses magnets and radio waves for soft tissue detail. Inform staff of metal implants before an MRI.



ECG & Biopsy

ECG records heart electrical activity. A biopsy examines tissue under a microscope — many biopsies do not result in a cancer diagnosis.

Chapter 4

Understanding Your Prescription

Medicines work best when taken exactly as prescribed. Before leaving the hospital or clinic, make sure you understand your prescription completely. If anything is unclear, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to explain it in simple terms.

What a Prescription Includes

- The name of each medicine and its strength
- How much to take and how often
- How long to continue the medicine
- Special instructions such as before or after meals

Common Timing Instructions

- **Once a day** — one time each day
- **Twice a day** — preferably 12 hours apart
- **Before meals** — about 30 minutes before eating
- **After meals** — shortly after eating to reduce stomach irritation
- **At bedtime** — before going to sleep

Important Safety Rules

Don't stop early. Always complete your course of treatment, even if you feel better. Stopping antibiotics early, for example, can lead to the illness returning.

Missed a dose? Take it as soon as you remember, unless your next dose is near. Never double up.

Watch for side effects. Contact your doctor immediately if you experience difficulty breathing, severe rash, persistent vomiting, or unusual bleeding.

Tell your doctor about allergies and all other medicines you are taking, including vitamins and herbal supplements.

Chapter 5

Hospital Admission: What to Expect

Not every medical condition requires a hospital stay. However, if your doctor believes you need closer observation, surgery, specialised treatment, or continuous nursing care, admission may be advised. Being prepared makes the process smoother for you and your family.

Why Admission May Be Needed

Planned surgery, serious illness or infection, emergency medical care, cancer treatment, conditions requiring continuous monitoring, or recovery that cannot be managed safely at home.

Admission Formalities

Registration and identity verification, submission of insurance or government scheme documents, consent forms, initial medical assessment, and billing formalities. Hospital staff will guide you through each step.

What to Bring

Comfortable clothing, toiletries, identity proof, medical records, medicine list, spectacles or hearing aids if needed, mobile phone and charger. Avoid bringing jewellery or large amounts of cash.

Your Care Team

You will be cared for by doctors, nurses, surgeons, physiotherapists, dietitians, pharmacists, and laboratory specialists — each playing an important role in your recovery.

Chapter 6

Patient Safety: A Shared Responsibility

Patient safety is a shared responsibility. Doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals follow established safety practices every day — but patients and families also play an important role. Staying informed, asking questions, and sharing accurate information can significantly reduce the risk of medical errors.



Share Complete Information

Tell your doctor about all allergies, long-term illnesses, surgeries, medicines, and supplements — even small details can be important for safe treatment.



Speak Up

Inform staff immediately if you notice new pain, difficulty breathing, fever, swelling, or any sudden change. Early reporting allows the team to respond quickly.



Prevent Falls

Wear non-slip footwear, use walking aids if advised, call for help if dizzy, and turn on the bedside light before getting up at night.



Verify Your Identity

Staff may ask your name, date of birth, or check your ID band before any procedure. These repeated checks ensure the right treatment is given to the right patient.



Prevent Infections

Wash hands regularly, keep wounds clean and dry, cover your mouth when coughing, and follow dressing change instructions to reduce the risk of infection.



Medicine Safety

Know the name, dose, and timing of every medicine. If a medicine looks different from usual, ask your nurse before taking it. Never take medicines from home without doctor approval.

Chapter 7

Preparing for Surgery

Hearing that you need surgery can feel overwhelming. Understanding the process can help you feel more confident and prepared. Your healthcare team will work to ensure your safety and comfort throughout.



Seek immediate medical advice after surgery if you experience fever, increasing pain, redness or swelling around the wound, difficulty breathing, or any symptom that concerns you.

Chapter 8

Understanding Cancer Care

A cancer diagnosis can bring fear, confusion, and uncertainty. It is important to remember that every person's cancer journey is different, and many cancers can be treated successfully — especially when detected early. Learning about your condition helps you make informed decisions and feel more confident throughout your care.

Common Warning Signs to Watch For

Many symptoms are not caused by cancer, but if any of the following persist for several weeks, consult a doctor:

- A lump or swelling that does not go away
- Unexplained weight loss or persistent fatigue
- Persistent cough, hoarseness, or difficulty swallowing
- Blood in urine or stool, or unusual bleeding
- A wound or ulcer that does not heal
- Changes in a mole or skin lesion
- Persistent changes in bowel or bladder habits

Common Treatment Options

Surgery

Removes the tumour or affected tissue.

Chemotherapy

Medicines that destroy cancer cells or stop them from growing.

Radiation

Targeted high-energy radiation to destroy cancer cells.

Targeted & Immuno

Newer medicines targeting specific cancer cells or boosting immunity.

Cancer Care

Living with Cancer: Support and Recovery

Cancer affects more than just the body — it can impact your emotions, relationships, work, and daily routine. These feelings are completely normal. Open communication with your doctor, nurses, family, or a counsellor can make a significant difference throughout treatment.

During Treatment

- Eat a balanced, nutritious diet
- Drink enough fluids daily
- Stay physically active as recommended
- Get adequate rest between sessions
- Attend all scheduled treatment appointments
- Report new symptoms promptly

Myths vs. Facts

- **Myth:** Cancer always causes pain. **Fact:** Many early-stage cancers cause little or no pain.
- **Myth:** Cancer is always hereditary. **Fact:** Many cancers occur without any family history.
- **Myth:** A diagnosis means no hope. **Fact:** Many cancers are treated successfully, especially when diagnosed early.

How Family Can Help

- Attend appointments when needed
- Help the patient remember medical advice
- Encourage healthy eating and regular medicines
- Watch for symptoms that need attention
- Simply being present and listening matters

Chapter 9

Going Home After Treatment

Leaving the hospital is an important step in your recovery. Before you go home, your healthcare team will ensure your condition is stable and provide clear instructions so you can continue your treatment safely. Take time to understand these instructions before you leave — and ask questions if anything is unclear.

1 Collect Your Discharge Summary

This document contains your diagnosis, treatment received, medicines prescribed, follow-up appointments, home care instructions, and warning signs to watch for. Keep it safe for future consultations and emergencies.

3 Care for Your Wound

Keep the wound clean and dry, wash hands before touching the dressing, attend dressing changes as advised, and contact your doctor if you notice redness, swelling, pus, or persistent bleeding.

2 Understand Your Medicines

Know the name, dose, timing, and duration of every medicine. Never stop medicines without medical advice, even if you feel better. Ask the pharmacist before leaving if anything is unclear.

4 Attend Follow-Up Appointments

Even if you feel well, follow-up visits are essential. Your doctor will check your recovery, review test results, adjust medicines if needed, and monitor for complications. Never skip a scheduled visit.

Recovery at Home

Eating Well, Resting, and Getting Back to Routine

Nutrition During Recovery

A healthy diet provides your body with the nutrients it needs to heal. Your doctor may recommend:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables daily
- Whole grains for sustained energy
- Protein-rich foods — pulses, eggs, fish, or lean meat
- Plenty of fluids, unless medically restricted

Follow any specific dietary advice given by your doctor or dietitian carefully.

When to Seek Immediate Help

Contact your doctor or visit the hospital right away if you experience:

- High fever or severe, increasing pain
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Heavy bleeding or swelling around a wound
- Persistent vomiting
- Sudden weakness or confusion
- Any new symptom that concerns you

⊗ Do not ignore symptoms simply because you have already been discharged. Your recovery continues at home.

Emotional Well-being

Looking After Your Mind During Recovery

Recovering from an illness or surgery can affect your emotional health as well as your physical health. It is completely normal to feel tired, worried, frustrated, or less active than usual. Emotional support is an important — and often overlooked — part of recovery.

Talk to Someone You Trust

Share your feelings with family, friends, or your healthcare team. If feelings of anxiety, sadness, or overwhelm persist, ask your doctor about counselling support.

Don't Rush Your Recovery

Every person heals at a different pace. Gradually increase your activity level as advised by your doctor, rather than trying to return to your normal routine too quickly.

Stay Connected

Maintaining connections with loved ones and engaging in gentle, enjoyable activities can support both your emotional and physical recovery.

Chapter 10

Frequently Asked Questions

Patients and their families often have similar questions before, during, and after a hospital visit. Here are clear, simple answers to the most common ones.

Do I need an appointment?

If your visit is planned, booking in advance reduces waiting time. However, for emergencies, go directly to the Emergency Department without waiting for an appointment.

Why am I asked the same questions repeatedly?

Repeated identity checks by different staff are a standard patient safety measure to ensure the correct treatment is given to the correct patient every time.

Can I continue my regular medicines?

Most regular medicines should be continued unless your doctor advises otherwise. Always inform your healthcare team about all medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Can I seek a second opinion?

Yes. Patients have the right to seek a second medical opinion, especially before major surgery or long-term treatment. Your medical records can support this process.

What if I experience side effects from medicines?

Do not stop medicines without advice. Contact your doctor for unusual symptoms. Seek immediate care if you have difficulty breathing, facial swelling, or severe skin reactions.

When should I seek emergency care?

Seek immediate help for chest pain, difficulty breathing, heavy bleeding, sudden weakness, high fever with worsening illness, severe allergic reactions, or any rapidly worsening condition.

Your Recovery Checklist

Before You Leave the Hospital

Use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need before heading home. Keeping these items organised will make your recovery smoother and your future visits easier.

- ☐ Discharge summary collected and stored safely
- ☐ All prescriptions received and understood
- ☐ Medical reports and investigation results in hand
- ☐ Follow-up appointment dates confirmed
- ☐ Hospital contact numbers noted
- ☐ Wound care instructions clearly understood
- ☐ Diet and activity restrictions explained
- ☐ Warning signs to watch for at home discussed

Simple Steps to Support Recovery

- Take medicines on time, every day, as prescribed.
- Eat a balanced diet and drink enough fluids.
- Get adequate rest and sleep.
- Stay physically active as recommended by your doctor.
- Attend every scheduled follow-up appointment.
- Report any concerning symptoms promptly.

A Final Word

Every patient's healthcare journey is unique. Staying informed, communicating openly with your healthcare team, and following medical advice can help you receive safe, effective, and compassionate care.

"We hope this guide has answered your questions and made your hospital experience easier to understand. If you need further assistance, please don't hesitate to speak with your doctor or any member of the healthcare team."

Stay Informed

Understand your diagnosis, tests, medicines, and treatment plan at every step.

Communicate Openly

Ask questions, share complete information, and speak up if something doesn't feel right.

Follow Your Plan

Take medicines correctly, attend follow-ups, eat well, and rest adequately.

We wish you good health and a smooth recovery.

